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# THE CONDOR

A Magazine of  
Western Ornithology

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## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

Editorial acknowledgment is hereby made to Mr. J. R. Pemberton for his efficient service in compiling the Index which concludes the current volume of THE CONDOR.

Two Californians went East to attend the American Ornithologists' Union congress held in Philadelphia this year, Mr. Joseph Mailliard and Mr. J. Eugene Law. A wire (November 13) has come from the former, announcing the election to Fellowship, of Mr. Harry S. Swarth. This is a well-deserved recognition of the high grade of Mr. Swarth's systematic work on Western birds. The number of Fellows in the A. O. U. is restricted to fifty. There are now six A. O. U. Fellows residing west of the Mississippi.

The *Ibis* for April contains an article of unusual worth, by C. F. M. Swynnerton, on the coloration of the mouths and eggs of birds. The significance in some cases seems to be clearly that of warning, there

being an accompaniment of bright color or conspicuous pattern with disagreeable taste or odor, such as is proven to discourage attention from potential enemies. Thus the older idea of a directive meaning must in part be supplanted. Here is a line of observation well worth taking up by field ornithologists in America.

Alice Hall Walter, in the school department of September *Bird-Lore*, utters some timely warnings in regard to current methods of popularizing bird study. She has clearly perceived an unfortunate tendency which can only be counteracted by repeated warnings such as she sounds. The trend of her remarks is indicated by the following quotations. "The superficial student, interested only in the popular side of ornithology, is apt to shun the trained ornithologist's method, to balk at his standard of thoroughness. . . . To be unable to concentrate one's attention upon a single problem which may be solved by careful observation" is a serious defect, "resulting inevitably in a lowered standard and a circumscribed acquaintance with bird-life." Whenever this kind of bird-study "tends to a sentimental, inaccurate and uninspired conception of the place of birds in nature and their value to man, it deserves the criticism of having degenerated into a study which cannot hold a secure place . . . " in schools or anywhere else, and is no longer worth encouraging.

The death of Lieutenant-Colonel E. Alexander Mearns took place at Washington, D. C., on November 1, in the 61st year of his age. Mearns is known to western ornithologists more especially through his field work along the Mexican boundary. Many valuable articles on southwestern birds have appeared from his pen.

## F. E. L. BEAL AND ECONOMIC ORNITHOLOGY IN CALIFORNIA

Our present knowledge of the food habits of California birds is in a large measure due to the painstaking work of Foster Ellenborough Lascelles Beal, Assistant, United States Biological Survey, who for many years devoted considerable attention to the economic relations of the birds of this State. The extent and importance of this work is emphasized anew by the news of Professor Beal's death, which took place at his home in Branchville, Maryland, on October 1, 1916, in his seventy-seventh year. From the fact that he was an honorary member of the Cooper Ornithological Club, and in view of his accomplishments in economic ornithology, it is fitting that a short review of Professor Beal's work in California appear in THE CONDOR at this time.